

## League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman City Council

Date: February 15, 2022

Observer Reporting: Anne Lewis (via You Tube recording)

Length of Meeting: 7 pm-9: 19 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Johnson; Councilmembers Macoll, Parks, Wright, Dueben, Benjamin, Guido

Members Absent: Nathan Weller (excused)

Others Present (e.g., media, public): A few people in audience.

### Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest:

#### Mayoral Announcements:

Washington State Department of Ecology gave Pullman the **Outstanding Performance Award**. Attorney Johnson presented to Trevor Cook, Supervisor of Pullman's Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Letter to Mayor **complimenting officers** who responded to a situation at a local hotel.

**Monthly utility shut offs resuming!** Notes Council and City want to help. CAC has options/funds, City has had previous presentations.

#### **Planning Commission, Lawson Gardens, Parks & Rec, Civil Service have openings for Board/Council.**

Confirmation of Reappointment- Ned Warnick to the Historic Preservation Commission.

*Local League Action: You have already requested input from Observers re: Boards (diversity, openings). Could reiterate openings to our Board (but I think this has been done, at least for some).*

#### Presentation

##### **2020 (Yes, '2020') Neill Public Library Report- Joanna Bailey**

League Priority: Library, City Services, Public Safety (Covid protocols)

-**Not considered an "essential service" during Pandemic.** Federal/state funds frozen. **Staff decreased from 20 to 2.** As Pandemic continued/state's recovery proceeded, gradually/cautiously phased in staff. By end of 2020, staff at 36%.

**\$ 98,389 raised by community** (via Friends) for books, grab & good bags.

Had to pivot significantly. **No longer the (physical) gathering place.** Cleaning intensive and time-consuming.

6,339 **curbside pickups.** "It lifted our hearts" to see people smiling with their eyes. An important way to access books, movies safely.

**Grab & Go Bags** funded solely by Friends of Library. Children, Tweens (STEAM Grab & Go & Self-Care Bags), Teens & Adults. Screen-Free independent activities. Friends also supported local merchants via gift certificates included in the G&G Bags.

#### Councilmembers response to Presentation:

Ann Parks: The Library is a Community Center- Not just for books. Being there, taking care of people in need. Joanna and staff have been unbelievable. Community working together to help each other.

Megan Guido comments along the lines of AP.

Frances Benjamin: Appreciate the passion and love for reading/literature.

*\*\*The 2020 Library Report & Tonight's Powerpoint is attached to this Observer Report.*

**Local League Action: Library Study in process/early stages (Alice, Anne, Kimberly, Karyn)!**

**Regular Meeting**

Joanna Bailey, Neill Library introduces **Ordinance for accepting Restricted Donation of \$49k** (from Neill Foundation?) Will be used for enlargement and improvement of the library. Wants to add employee workspaces. No opposition by Council.

Ordinance 26-6- Titles I and IV, continuing **Lodging Tax Advising Commission**. Fair bit of "quorum" discussion.

**Max speed of North Grand at Kitzmiller/270.** Discussion began with Aspen Heights Development. Will become 45 MPH (Currently 55 MPH) + a roundabout.

**Discussion Items**

League Priority: Business Development v. Livability, Traffic:

**>>Potential Sale of City Property (Starbucks & Forenza)**

Property in question is (I think!) very close to The Armory. Fair amount of discussion/confusion over what is city, public, etc. in the area. i.e., 6 parking spots (no man's land?).

Council initially starts getting into traffic study, focus on Starbucks (the business ultimately interested in the property parcel). Attorney McAloon injects that the Issue before Council is whether to Lease, Sell, or Do Nothing a piece of vacant city land. The City Council does not have a role/input now—or ever-- re: development.

Parcel has previously been offered to current owners. Councilors discuss consistency (in terms of selling) without considering ownership.

Francis Benjamin notes that it is difficult timing as waiting for Downtown Master Plan/options—we don't know how integral/appealing that piece of land is.

Mayor Johnson: Initial "wrap up" and statement of: "Not making a decision tonight." EM encourages all to "walk the property." McAloon says Council *can* provide direction/make a motion.

Then Pat Wright suggests the council recommend a ground lease proposal. Needs to request something in order to get additional information (re: safety, traffic). McAloon reiterates: Details about site plan approval, traffic studies are through Public Works NOT City Council.

Benjamin seconds ground lease. Vote on motion for ground lease negotiation. 3 for and 3 Against (Parks, Guido, Macoll). A tie. Mayor Johnson to break the tie. Johnson Votes YES to negotiating a ground lease. Cites consistency.

*Local League Action: None at this Time.*

League Priority: Traffic, Fiscal Responsibility

**>>Purpose and Needs Statement of Study drafted by Public Works to submit to WSDOT.** Ultimate goal is to "Reduce pass-through freight travel within the Pullman downtown." Been working on submitting this in a way WSDOT will/can assist with. i.e., Need "practical and fundable solutions", rather than a request to study North and South options (which is what City Council, City went in with). Focus on Sandy/Kirkendahl Road (so that we can potentially get funding).

*Local League Action: None at this Time.*

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